Alleged Oswald note Dallas News 4-6-77

FBI can't determine authenticity of letter

By EARL GOLZ

The FBI cannot determine whether Lee Harvey Oswald wrote a letter to a "Mr. Hunt" two weeks before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, a U.S. Justice Department source said Tuesday.

Three handwriting experts commissioned by The News concluded last week the letter is "the authentic writing of Lee Harvey Oswald and was written by him."

The FBI said without the original letter it would be "almost impossible to certify whether it is genuine or not," the Justice Department source said.

"And they (FBI) said that Oswald has a childlike handwriting and it's easily forged," the source said, "so they just can't tell."

The FBI declined to directly comment on the letter's authenticity. In 1964, the FBI repeatedly identified handwriting on documents as Oswald's during the Warren Commission investigation. The agency also determined in several cases that year that signatures of cranks on guest books around the country were not Oswald's.

When told of the FBI's reaction to the "Mr. Hunt" letter, one of the three handwriting analysts, Mary C. Harrison of Richardson, said she didn't "know what they mean" by labeling the script "childlike."

"If they (FBI) know anything at all about handwriting, they can tell that the same party wrote that letter," Mrs. Harrison said. "There is just no doubt in my mind. And I can prove it by breaking it down stroke by stroke.".

She said handwriting experts "go to court often on Xerox copies . . . I would go to court on it (Oswald letter) any day."

Mrs. Harrison and the other two handwriting analysts who examined the letter, Mary I. Duncan of Toronto, Canada, and Allan R. Keown of El Paso, are among about 100 certified members of one of the most respected handwriting organizations in the western hemisphere, the Independent Association of Questioned Document Examiners.

The terse note, dated Nov. 8, 1963, was addressed to "Dear Mr. Hunt" and signed by "Lee Harvey Oswald." It asked for "information concerning my position . . . I am suggesting that we discuss the matter fully before any steps are taken by me or anyone else."

Oswald's wife testified before the Warren Commission, which apparently didn't know of the existence of the letter, that Oswald on Nov. 8, 1963, failed to pay a visit to her, as scheduled, at the Irving home where she was then living.

Oswald told his wife he failed to show up because "there was another job open, more interesting work . . . related to photography," according to Mrs. Marina Oswald's testimony before the Warren Commission in 1964. At the time he was working at the Texas State Book Depository Building, from where the Warren Commission concluded he triggered the rifle that killed Kennedy.